



# AETC News Clips

## Randolph AFB, Texas



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### Bill would help military children

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**Jenny LaCoste-Caputo**  
**Express-News Staff Writer**

A handful of Texas lawmakers is pushing a proposal that would provide free pre-kindergarten for the children of U.S. soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines.

"Pre-K is a wonderful program which I hope we can expand to all children someday," said Rep. Carlos Uresti, D-San Antonio, who is championing a bill to provide the free pre-K. "But this is the least I think we can do for our military with the sacrifices they are making."

The proposal would make the child of an active duty member of the armed forces or a member of the National Guard or Reserve eligible for pre-kindergarten. The child of a military member who is killed or injured while serving would remain eligible.

The cost would be an estimated \$7 million.

State Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano, has wrapped that chamber's version of the measure into House Bill 1, a sweeping bill that would spend \$2.4 billion to reduce school property taxes and add a slew of education reforms to state law, indicating it could have strong support in both chambers.

The state already pays for pre-kindergarten for economically disadvantaged children, children who don't speak English and children who are homeless, and it estimates it reaches 70 percent of that eligible population.

Last year, Texas spent \$388 million on pre-kindergarten programs for 176,547 children.

Uresti and state Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, D-San Antonio, said they have widespread support for the measure, though some on the Senate Public Education Committee initially questioned the cost.

Van de Putte said an invitation to tour the amputee and burn units at Brooke Army Medical Center brought legislators around.

"They just needed to be reminded of what these military members are risking," she said.

Last year a report from Pre-K Now, a Washington advocacy group, found that 19 governors — Gov. Rick Perry was not among them — sought more public spending on preschool, a result of the growing consensus about its benefits.



Jerry Lara/Express-News  
"Cowboy" the puppy gets the attention of Tiffany Jureczki's pre-kindergarten students at Lackland Elementary School.

***San Antonio Express News***

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Georgia and Oklahoma have established pre-kindergarten programs for all 4-year-olds. New York, West Virginia and Florida implemented universal pre-kindergarten this school year, and several more states are considering it.

David Splittek, superintendent for Lackland Independent School District, a public school district on Lackland AFB, said expanding pre-kindergarten is always a good idea.

"I wish they'd fund it for all kids," Splittek said.

Already, about 50 percent of the 5,400 3-and 4-year-old children of military members in Texas are eligible for pre-kindergarten, according to Van de Putte.

At Lackland, there are five pre-K classes. Two serve 3-year-olds, two more serve 4-year-olds and one is for children with disabilities ranging from mild learning disabilities to autism.

Children learn pre-reading skills and are immersed in language arts.

Though every classroom in Lackland's pre-K wing is in use, Kay Norton, principal at Lackland Elementary School, said space wouldn't be an obstacle if every 3-and 4-year-old were eligible.

"We'll find it," she said. "We would be so thrilled to have them."



# AETC News Clips

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**04 May 06**

### Power plant proposed

#### Approach may solve landfill's methane issue

By **ERIC FINLEY**, [efinley@sastandardtimes.com](mailto:efinley@sastandardtimes.com) or 659-8262  
May 4, 2006

San Angelo City Manager Harold Dominguez said it could be one of the biggest projects City Hall has undertaken in years - building a power plant that might one day generate an annual profit of \$12 million.

The City Council on Tuesday agreed to work with a private company toward building the plant. The city would take methane from the landfill and water treatment plant and use it to burn trash from the landfill to create electricity.

Remembering residents' backlash against the faith-based prison proposal before the county, city officials are wasting no time meeting with them. City Councilman Emilio Perez-Jimenez, who represents the area of San Angelo adjacent to the proposed plant site, will conduct a town hall meeting tonight with Dominguez.

"I believe (City Hall) has every obligation to inform the public before they get misinformation," Perez-Jimenez said. "My idea, and goal, is to keep them informed about what this plan is all about."

It's not cheap. Estimates put the cost to build the plant between \$24 million and \$100 million, depending on the plant's size. City Hall believes it could be the best solution to fix a growing methane problem in the landfill - and save space there.

Add the potential revenue from electric sales and from charging other communities to dump trash, Dominguez said, and it's a project worth trying.

"We have to (remove the methane) from the landfill," Dominguez said. "But instead of just flaring it off, then we are going to use it to generate electricity."

The proposal must still overcome a series of hurdles, such as obtaining several permits from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

TCEQ has told the city it must remove the methane from its aging landfill or face financial penalties. Landfills naturally produce methane as garbage deteriorates.

A site for the power plant hasn't been determined, but the necessity to have it near the landfill would probably put it on city-owned property east of San Angelo's city limits.

Tom Green County commissioners recently decided against moving forward with a privately run prison. Its tentative site was in the same area.

Under the plan, City Hall would build the plant with money issued through bonds. Cities, unlike school districts, don't have to hold elections to issue bonds.

Siemens Building Technologies would operate the plant because the city lacks staff members with expertise to run an electric plant.

***San Angelo Standard Times***

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The plan is to generate eight to 10 megawatts of power initially and sell it to three Air Force bases - Goodfellow in San Angelo, Laughlin in Del Rio and Sheppard in Wichita Falls - at a rate sufficient to pay off the project's debt in 15 years.

A megawatt, or 1 million watts, can provide enough power for 300 to 400 homes in Texas at any given moment.

Goodfellow spokeswoman Cheri Dedrick referred questions about the proposal to a spokeswoman with the Air Education and Training Command in San Antonio. The spokeswoman was not available for comment Wednesday. All three bases operate under the Air Education and Training Command.

Revenue from the contracts would pay off the debt for the plant, Dominguez said, and the city would probably seek other potential customers as well.

During a presentation to the council in November, Siemens estimated the city could bring in \$12 million a year in profit once the plant is paid off after 15 years. That's more than half the amount the city collects in property taxes, and the money could go toward better infrastructure or property-tax relief, Dominguez said.

If Siemens or the city can't get the proper permits from the state, "We both go our separate ways," Dominguez said. "If anything doesn't make this feasible, we go our separate ways."

However, if the city backs out on its own, it will owe Siemens \$400,000 for its work.

The city already is moving forward with a plan to build a system of flares at the landfill and burn off the methane. The project would cost about \$2.3 million. The city probably will issue bonds to pay for the project.

The city hopes that's only a short-term fix until a power plant is constructed.

The plan already has support from environmentally conscious groups.

"We support the use of methane from trash or landfills to generate electricity," said Tom Smith, director of the Texas office of Public Citizen, a consumer and environmental group.

Waste-to-energy plants such as the one San Angelo is proposing are required to filter the exhaust produced from burning trash. The result is exhaust much cleaner than traditional trash burns, which can be harmful to the environment, Smith said.

"It's a win-win-win for the community," he said. "It doesn't stink, and it gets rid of methane, which is 20 times more potent to global warming than carbon dioxide."

***San Angelo Standard Times***

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# AETC News Clips

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## Flaw could shorten Raptors' lives

*By Ed Offley*

*News Herald Writer 747-5079 / eoffley@pcnh.com*

The F-22A Raptor has been designed with a service life of 8,000 flying hours, but a faulty manufacturing process discovered four months ago may cause a key structural component in 90 of the new fighters to age prematurely, officials said Monday.

The "forward boom frames" in the 62-foot-long fighter are constructed of titanium, a lightweight but extremely strong metal, and are used to anchor the aircraft's wings to its fuselage, said Air Force spokesman Doug Karas. During routine testing in December, Karas said, officials discovered that the titanium components may have been "improperly" treated, creating the possibility that the metal would not last as long as it is supposed to.

The flawed components, Karas said, "do not affect safety of flight and, consequently, no restrictions have been put on F-22 flight operations."

The problem affects Raptors No. 4017 through 4107, including most of the 66 Raptors that already have been delivered to the Air Force and several dozen more still being manufactured, Karas said. There are 23 Raptors assigned to Tyndall Air Force Base for F-22 pilot training with another six scheduled to arrive in the next year.

"This is not a result of improper design, but an issue with one supplier's manufacturing process," Karas said in a statement to The News Herald.

A spokesman with the Lockheed Martin Corp., prime contractor for the F-22, said Monday the company is working closely with Air Force experts to determine the extent of the problem. Structural tests including "fatigue" tests of the fuselage booms are continuing, said company spokesman Joe Quimby.

Under a "heat treat" process, the titanium boom frames are raised to a high temperature in order to "achieve the desired grain structure" in the metal, Karas said. "A section of the forward boom frames under investigation may not have been held at this temperature long enough" to reach the targeted strength, he said.

The trade publication Defense News reported Monday that it will cost about \$1 billion to fix the flawed boom frames, but both Karas and Quimby flatly denied that allegation.

Raptor program officials also have identified the need to reinforce the aft boom in 41 of 73 Raptors to strengthen the juncture where the tail is attached to the fuselage, according to Air Force officials quoted by Defense News. (Of those 73 aircraft, 66 also are affected by the forward boom heat-treatment flaws, officials said.)

An Air Force spokesman told Defense News that the discovery occurred as part of the normal testing process for each new aircraft design.

"As the aircraft come down the production line, they continue to test the fleet," said Maj. Keith Scheirmann, chief of Raptor heavy maintenance and modifications at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. "Sometimes, we find areas where we want to go back and enhance the capability or upgrade the aircraft," he told the publication.

Still, fixing the problem in each airplane could require removing the wings to inspect the boom area, a time-intensive and expensive process, officials said.

The Air Force and Lockheed Martin are conducting further tests at a company facility to determine the severity of the problems and hope to have answers by the end of May.

***The News Herald***

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The Defense Department and Congress have agreed to cap the F-22 program at 183 aircraft. Lockheed Martin has contracts to build another 107 of the advanced fighters, Quimby said.

Tyndall Air Force Base is home to 23 F-22A Raptors, and another six are expected to arrive within a year.

***The News Herald***

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